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THE

Commonweal

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by John K. Cooley

The Future of Distributism

by James V. Schall

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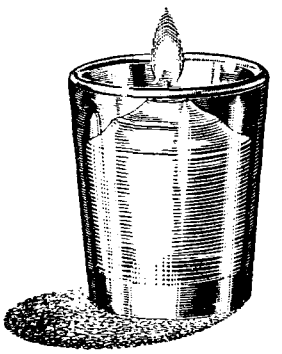

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THE COMMONWEAL
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The Commonweal

week by week

BANDUNG AND FORMOSA

PRIME Minister Jawaharlal Nehru wanted to bar the cold war from the Bandung conference. Neutralism, the identity of interests of the Asian and African countries, their historical grievance against the colonial West, were to be the subjects of the conference. And China's protestations of good will and Asian solidarity are more congenial to neutralism than are the militarily-oriented cold war policies of the West.

But the cold war intruded—not on little cats' feet but noisily, with Filipino stubbornness. At the first session, General Romulo spoke critically, honestly and admirably of the American record in Asia, and he put a challenge to the new colonizers and to "certain other countries which from our perspective we consider as subservient to other powers." Prime Minister Ali of Pakistan, Fatin Rustu Zorlu of Turkey, Prince Wan Waithayakon of Thailand, the delegates from Iran and Iraq, all identified Communism as a modern manifestation of imperialism. General Romulo later contrasted the old empires upon which the sun never set with the new one in which the sun never rises. But the surprise climax of the anti-Communist movement was the speech of Sir John Kotelawala of Ceylon, who demanded that the Cominform be disbanded and the East European satellites be freed.

Premier Chou of China must have gone through some uncomfortable hours at the first sessions. His resilience and tact, though, were remarkable. He was calm; he was reason itself when he spoke. To Sir John he talked of the futility of arguing ideologies. To Prince Wan and General Romulo he issued invitations to visit China and see if things really were so bad. To the United States he proffered a qualified invitation to negotiate directly on the Formosa issue. Only for Mr. Nehru did he have no gift, and Mr. Nehru is the man who seems to have lost the most in prestige and respect at the conference, angering most of all his neighbor, Sir John. There was a poignant scene at the first session when Mr. Nehru, who had his own ideas about how things should be done, urged that to save time opening statements merely be circulated rather than delivered. The Acting Secretary of State of Liberia replied, "That is easy to say for a power that is always able to speak and be heard, but we are a small nation and when we speak it is not often that anyone will listen. We have come a long way to attend this conference and we would like to be heard." He was heard, and so were twenty-eight other countries whose voices would have been inaudible forty years ago.

THE United States did not perform very astutely at Bandung. We sent no direct greetings, and apparently the State Department tried to prevent the attendance of Representative Adam Clayton Powell, the Negro Congressman who seems to have been an effective unofficial observer, and whose defense of the United States on the race question countered much of the Communist racial propaganda.

Our reply to the Chou bid for Formosa negotiations was equally unfortunate. It sounded as though we are fundamentally opposed to negotiations. Are we?

It must be obvious to all but the most sublimely optimistic that real peace is at the bottom of the list of Chinese wants—down below the conquest of Quemoy, Matsu, Formosa, and below mainland expansion. But tactical truce, conceived in mutual distrust and power-balance, may be higher up on the Chinese agenda, and if we give to the world—and to China—the idea that we are absolutely unwilling to talk truce (or if we set humiliating conditions), then we may yet get into a cruel little war that will serve most of all to ruin the Western alliance.

John Foster Dulles commented, after the recent Adlai Stevenson speech on Formosa policy, that Mr. Stevenson had "endorsed the main features" of the Administration program. This was no small surprise—not least, we suspect, to Mr. Dulles'

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colleagues in the Administration—but it did confirm the fact that the State Department wants to get out of trouble on the Formosa issue. The Administration had, of course, gotten into that trouble back in 1953 when it irresponsibly urged Chiang to fortify Quemoy and Matsu. It now looks upon that episode as—to borrow a term from the Democrats—ancient history.

The problem now is how to get out of the offshore islands with as much grace as possible and as few repercussions as possible in the Nationalist government and army. But mistakes of these proportions demand their price, and the price of a Formosa truce is not going to be cheap. The price will have to be paid, however, for the alternate price of war over the offshore islands is a lot bigger. As Senator George says, the thing to be done is to negotiate. We still have the islands as bargaining levers, and if we use them properly we may salvage something from the wreckage of our Formosa policy.

STOCKHOLDERS' ROLE

THIS is the big season for the annual meetings of leading American corporations. They are no longer the mere formalities which automatically gave active management *carte-blanche* in former years. Attendance is reaching overflow proportions. Stockholders' questions from the floor are greatly on the increase—some seemingly spontaneous and others prepared considerably in advance. The six-hour Montgomery Ward meeting of April 22 provides the most spectacular example. Months went into the Wolfson preparations to unseat the incumbents; an insurgent victory may be possible a year from now. Hard upon the recent Robert Young conquest of New York Central this serves to show that American management can no longer placidly count on having its unchallenged way in such matters. Opposition to certain management policies, if sufficiently determined, has ways of making itself felt.

The efforts of one Lewis D. Gilbert and his associates supply another illustration on a more modest scale. Mr. Gilbert has for some years now made a practice of buying shares in a number of leading corporations and participating actively in their annual meetings. He is currently opposed to what he considers excessive rewards for executive services. Such emoluments are normally conferred in several ways. There are special opportunities to buy blocks of the company's securities at lower than the going market price. Upon retirement there are handsome retainers for consultation and very substantial pensions—the latter often built up at the same mathematical ratio to salary as that applying to lowest paid employees.

Mr. Gilbert and a growing number of American stockholders are convinced that there should be much greater restrictions on arrangements of this sort. In one corporation he would add to the board an "outside" director who would have to pass on all such agreements; in another (American Telephone and Telegraph) he would set a ceiling of $25,000 on all annual retirement pensions. Nearly fifteen per cent of AT&T stockholders voted for this latter proposal last year.

The companies' side of the story is that such special inducements—in addition to high salaries—have to be made to secure and retain the most able executives. With the largest companies such extra sums would hardly affect profits materially or go very far if spread among the rank and file of the workers. Time and again it is doubtless possible to demonstrate that the executives in question actually earned for their companies all and more of their present and future compensation. The desired limitations, then, would stem from the emphatically social character of big business in the United States. Such highly profitable private arrangements and excessive personal enrichment are hardly appropriate in operations encompassing the fortunes of so many workers, consumers and small investors.

NEXT WEEK

MARTIN TURNELL writes on the problem of literature and religious belief for the Spring Book Issue:

"We are faced with two apparently irreconcilable views. One regards dogma as the death of literature, the other regards it as the condition of its continued life. One thinks that man must accept the limitations of his created state, the other that any form of limitation leads to sterility. Although the premises are indeed irreconcilable, it is not to be assumed that all truth is on one side and all error on the other. . . . It is a common fallacy to assume that if you have the right beliefs or if you succeed in ridding yourself of superstition, your work will be good. The literary critic is not concerned with the truth of beliefs, but with their *application* to literature. . . . Given the talent, the success of a religious poem or a religious novel depends on a very delicate balance between the man who believes and the man who writes. When the balance is achieved the work is a success; when it is not the work is a failure."

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LAST CHANCE FOR PRESSURE

EITHER French colonials never learn or they must reach a point where they are beyond caring. Whatever the reason, the French in Viet Nam are continuing a policy certain to turn all of their former colony over to the Communists. If seven years of war with the Viet Minh appear to have taught the French authorities little, that period should have enlightened the United States a good deal.

We know now that American matériel should have been withheld until the French had made adequate provision for training a strong native defense force and set a definite date for independence, thereby spiking much of Ho Chi Minh's propaganda appeal. And we also know that a solidly independent South Viet Nam comprises the only hope of salvaging anything from the Geneva agreements and holding the line in Southeast Asia.

The French originally armed the dissident private armies against the Viet Minh Communists. By their stranglehold on fuel and ammunition in Saigon they are now able to prevent Premier Ngo Dinh Diem from forcibly suppressing these well-armed threats to his authority. Failure to throw adequate support to those forces embodying the aspirations of the Vietnamese people has been an American error all along. This time the consequences will be irreparable if we do not strongly support the Diem regime against the dissidents and the French until such time as that government is able to carry through its proposed elections.

POSTSCRIPT TO HISTORY

IT is a little late, but an Anglo-German textbook conference recently agreed on the main facts which led up to the outbreak of World War I, and the conclusions reached are not without interest and, possibly, profit in our present situation. Contrary to popular opinion, the British and German historians agreed, economic rivalry actually played a very small part in the events leading up to the war. "Neither the British nor the German government," the report said, "allowed commercial rivalry to determine policy." German policy in 1914 was not directed at bringing about a European war. "It was primarily directed by the alliance obligations to Austria and Hungary. In order to prevent the potentially disastrous dissolution of Austria and Hungary, assurances were given which amounted to a blank check." According to the historians, Europe actually blundered into war in 1914, and in the events that led up to that tragic happening the ruling motive was neither a desire for war nor the urge to dominate; it was fear—fear on both sides.

SENATOR McCARTHY'S REFUND

SENATOR McCarthy has his income-tax refund, and apparently this is the last chapter in a disquieting and inconclusive story. The Senator's financial affairs were originally looked into by a Senate subcommittee a couple of years ago. That investigation turned out to be unsatisfactory to both sides. Senator McCarthy refused to appear before it to answer questions, and the subcommittee did not subpoena him. It did, however, go into some of his affairs—the $10,000 payment by Lustron, the $20,000 loan by the Washington representative of Pepsi-Cola, bank deposits amounting to $172,623 over a four-year period.

At the time, The Commonweal said: ". . .the subcommittee questioned whether inside knowledge, gained from his seat on the Senate Banking & Currency Committee, was responsible for Senator McCarthy's profits on the stock of a company which was in debt to RFC for $15,000,000. This was a good question, and the subcommittee raised many more in its four-hundred-page report. But answering questions, rather than raising them, was supposed to be the function of the subcommittee. Its claim that the report 'speaks for itself' in order to avoid concrete recommendations actually prepared the way for the cries of 'smear' which are now going up from Senator McCarthy's followers."

As might have been expected, Senator McCarthy's more devoted followers are now hailing his tax refund as a complete vindication. It certainly would seem to indicate that his income-tax affairs are in order, regardless of other still unanswered questions, and we agree that if any publication intimated without proof that the Senator was guilty of financial misconduct in this regard it now has a duty to publish the facts about his refund. But we do not think magazines and newspapers which simply took note of ins-and-outs of Senator McCarthy's financial life and supported the idea of a thorough investigation were in any way at fault—quite the contrary. The question of his financial dealings had been widely discussed, and Senator McCarthy could quite easily have met the situation by frank testimony, it seems to us. At the time, his persistent refusal to appear before the subcommittee was puzzling, but in the light of later experience, his conduct makes more sense. For this disdain for normal means, this persistent

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attitude of being somehow unlike other mortals and thus above the law, later turned out to be an essential part of the McCarthy public character. It was this fact, not his relations with the Internal Revenue department, which eventually led to his censure by the Senate. The plea that the Senate should now apologize to him because he received a tax refund is sheer nonsense.

NO NAMES, PLEASE

IN certain sections of the American press, particularly (we are sorry to note) of the American Catholic press, debate over the complex issue of the offshore islands has degenerated into the familiar "you're following the Party line" routine. Thus, we read that those who favor abandonment of Quemoy and Matsu "for the most part favor Communist China" and that the mere suggestion that American policy in the Formosa Strait should remain flexible is equivalent to treason. Apart from any question of what our policy in the present crisis should be, the continuing tendency of the American right to impute subversive motives—or at least unAmerican inclinations—to anyone who disagrees with Senator Knowland is one of the most distressing features of political debate today.

A good case can be made for United States' defense of Quemoy and Matsu and a man should be able to advance it without being called a warmonger. A good case can also be made for withdrawal from these islands, and a man who makes this case should not be branded an appeaser. The consequences of whatever course we may finally choose are far too serious to permit the childish name-calling game in which many are now engaged. Never before in our history has the need for responsible national debate on a great issue been more pressing. There seemed a danger, at first, that there would be no debate, that we might silently drift into a situation from which there was no retreat. That the debate finally started is a hopeful thing and it must not be ruined now by those on either side who prefer mindless sloganeering to sober thought.

THE DEATH OF A SCIENTIST

NO man's death can leave us wholly unmoved, but in the passing of certain men we relearn, as it were, the mortality of all physical things, whatever their grandeur and strength. These are men who have made their era and countless eras to come—the molders and prophets of the human race. Such a man was Albert Einstein and in his death a part of history itself seemed to die.

We would not attempt to comment on Einstein's contributions to science, but we all live in their shadow and must attempt to deal with the awful realities his genius made possible. Where he left off the statesmen and moralists must begin.

In her reminiscence of the scientist published in this issue Anne Fremantle testifies to the nobility and gentleness which distinguished Albert Einstein in all of his words and works. He was a humble man, a shy man, and he never grew used to the fame that was his. He never felt himself to be important, and he never lost his sense of mystery before the facts of creation. This sense, he once wrote, "is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and to stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed . . . To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself in the highest wisdom and the most radical beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of true religiousness."

It was in the sense of sharing in this mystical emotion, "and in this sense only," Einstein said, that he belonged in the ranks of religious men. The name of that God whom he saw as "the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. . . . a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe" was unknown to him. Nor, he said, could he believe in personal immortality or in "a God who rewards and punishes the objects of his creation, whose purposes are modeled after our own—a God, in short, who is modeled after human frailty." Such a statement proves, of course, that for all his genius Einstein had only the most distorted notions of Christian theology, and finding such notions grotesque, he rejected them. A God "modeled after human frailty" is indeed a God in whom no intelligent man could believe, and to the extent that we Christians seem to postulate such a God, to that extent we are responsible for a man like Einstein's ignorance of the true God.

But now, for Albert Einstein, all that is passed: there is no further need for theology, no further possibility of misunderstanding the God Who, far from being modeled on human frailty, is He Who is. May this great man, who served the truth as he knew it so passionately and so humbly during his life, now know the Author of truth, face to face, for all eternity.

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Moroccan Diary

"FOR OVER TWO YEARS NOW, THE NATIONALIST UNDERGROUND HAS FOUGHT A GRIM STRUGGLE WITH SUCCEEDING PROTECTORATE REGIMES"

JOHN K. COOLEY

THE background for these notes is the restless Morocco of 1954 and 1955, seemingly still as far as ever from achieving the self-rule and national unity of the young Arab states of the Middle East, whence its nationalists look for guidance. Spanish Morocco, a tiny coastal strip that is the home of only one-tenth of all the people of Morocco, is a center of this nationalist feeling. Its rulers refuse, ostensibly on religious grounds, to recognize the suzerainty of Sultan Moulay Mohammed ben Arafa, installed by the French and the Moroccans friendly to them in Rabat to replace pro-nationalist Sultan Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef, exiled in 1953, and now *in absentia* a sort of personified symbol of the anti-French feeling to which the Spanish government, along with the Arab League, has chosen to lend its support.

The remainder of Morocco, save the internationalized city of Tangier, taxless resort and refuge for an incredible mixed society, has been under a French protectorate since 1912. Thirty years after French soldiers, colonists and technicians began the gigantic task of pacifying an essentially medieval land, torn by anarchy, and introducing Western methods in every field of human endeavor from farming to public health, World War II completed the shattering of centuries of isolation. A small group of Moroccans, largely educated abroad, and representing mainly the upper and middle classes of Rabat and Fez, founded the Istiqlal, or independence party, now outlawed in Morocco, and apparently drifting closer toward collaboration with the Communists, whose support they have refused in the past.

In some measure, the nationalists professed to be encouraged by the building of American air and naval bases and the stationing of thousands of Americans on Moroccan soil. They did find a trenchant, though often cautious spokesman in Sidi Mohammed until his dethronement: but against them, the French had long been building up the power of the southern Berber chieftains and pashas, who historically have been often hostile toward the Arabs since the latter, invading from the east, forcibly converted them to Islam in the eighth century A.D.

For over two years now, the nationalist underground, resorting to terrorism in an attempt to frighten Frenchmen out of the country and to draw the attention of the United Nations and world opinion to their demands, has fought a grim struggle with succeeding Protectorate regimes. A somewhat similar struggle in neighboring Algeria, nominally a part of France, entered the stage of guerrilla warfare last fall, even as the Mendès-France government succeeded in restoring peace to Tunisia. Thus far the United States, despite its military commitments in Morocco, has managed to preserve a precarious neutrality.

DECEMBER 18, 1954: The change in the weather, as we cross from Algeciras to Ceuta on the Spanish intercontinental ferry, seems contrived by some cosmic tourist bureau. A cold, sullen drizzle in Spain gives way to a burst of silver over the African coast, and then the grey towers and battlements of Ceuta appear against a bright backdrop of blue-grey clouds and yellow sunshine. Ceuta itself is a medieval fortress-town held by Christians since 1415, and as much a part of Spain as anything in Barbary can be; yet dull and uninspiring.

At Castillejos, a few miles from the harbor, we pass customs and see Arabs with their donkeys for the first time. We are out of Spain at last. To our left, a long beach of snow-white sand as far as the eye can see; beyond the rugged silhouette of the Riff mountain ranges, down to the southeast. The sun sets, and it is dusk as we drive past the first Hispano-Mauresque buildings of Tetuan.

"You are English or American?" the Arab proprietor of the *pensione* we have picked out for the night asks us in Spanish, with a toothy smile. In his face I see mirrored the close affinities between Arabs and Spaniards, betraying again the relationships that show up in their music, their mannerisms, in the very architecture of their mosques and churches.

In the narrow, winding streets of the *medina,* with

Mr. Cooley, an American journalist now living in Morocco, has traveled widely in that country.

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its market sounds and its odors of the spices of other centuries, there is a hushed, Biblical feeling. The *mellah,* as the North African ghettos are called, is louder and livelier. Here more Spanish is spoken than either Arabic or Hebrew, but it is soft, melodic Spanish, less incisive than the Castilian of Spain. Many signs are in Hebrew, as seems only proper in a city known to North African Jews as "the little Jerusalem."

An Arab youth at a cafe, Si Ahmed, the son of well-to-do parents, astounds me with a knowledge of English and American books from Henry Fielding to Erle Stanley Gardner, as we drink mint tea together. He is studying in the one normal school provided by the Spanish administration for the one million people in their zone, and plans to become a teacher. I am inclined to believe him that Tetuan, like the holy cities of Fez and Kairouan, deserves its reputation among the Arab states as a city of scholars, but he admits that the aspiring men of letters, politicians and lawyers far outweigh the future doctors, technicians and engineers.

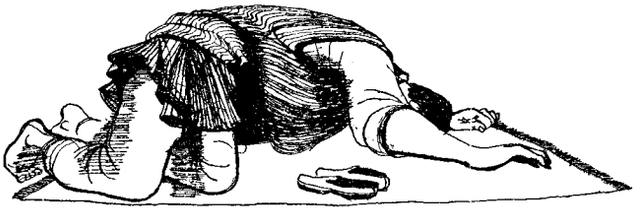
He assures me that there is only political tranquility in all of the Riff. "He is still *our* Sultan," he says, pointing to a stylized portrait of Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef, dethroned by the French in August 1953. These portraits are all over the *medina,* as decals on the walls of houses; in barber shops, inside the restaurant stalls were fish is frying over open wood fires.

December 19: A hot, bright morning. We photograph in color two palaces: that of Caliph Moulay el-Hassan el-Mehdi, chief of Spanish zone Moslems, and facing it, one housing Lt. Gen. Garcia Valino, the Spanish High Commissioner, with gardens suggesting the Generaliffe in Granada. There are a few beggars outside the gates, guarded by two dismounted lancers, and a volunteer guide about ten years old offers to show us the Spanish school of Moroccan arts and crafts. I have seen it before, and we are anxious to reach Tangier by noon.

Out on the road to the International Zone, the sun is shaded by a few clouds. The hills might be those of Colorado; they are the foothills of the Riff, where Abd-el-Krim nearly succeeded in driving the Spaniards from North Africa in the 1920s, and where the bandit Raissouli kidnapped the Greek-American, Mr. Perdicaris, and held him for ransom, giving George Bernard Shaw a central episode for "Man and Superman." There is a sprinkling of green near the Tangier customs house, and then the barrenness of the *djebel* gives way to broad, plowed fields, fenced in by prickly-pear cactus. We pass a bull ring, and suddenly gleaming white apartment-hotels seem to sprout out of the desert. This is Tangier.

December 20: Tangier remains its preposterous, bustling self. There is an air of artifice about its streets and shops, its Spanish, French, Arab, British, American, Portuguese, Swedish and Italian officialdom; about its Spanish, Hindu and Jewish merchants; about the booths of the money-changers on the Petite Socco and the Boulevard Pasteur. The city's whole existence seems somehow contrived for business alone, as it doubtless seemed during its beginnings as a Phoenician trading post.

Almost any old-time resident, in cafe talk, represents himself as well-versed in the incredible intrigues of Moroccan politics. "I would be glad to introduce you to some Istiqlal (independence party) leaders," the Britisher sipping coffee at the bar of the Minzah Hotel tells me. "They are not all in Cairo or the Spanish zone, you know. Many are right here." The smiling policeman in civilian clothes, who insists on treating us to a glass of tea after our luncheon of fried fish on the Grand Zocco, is more reticent about politics, but willing to inform us that we can buy cigarettes cheaply down at the wharves, "right off the boat." He shrugs when I ask him why the Control Commission can afford new roads but no public school system.



December 21: Once purchases have been made and mailing taken care of, we are anxious to be on the road to Rabat. First we must pass another fifty-mile stretch of the Spanish zone. Near the customs, an unruly camel plowing a grain field with an ancient wooden plow revolts, growls and tries to bite his master. Arcila, Larache and Alcazarquivir are nondescript towns of yellowing adobe, stamped deeply with the imprints of poverty and lassitude. The roads are terrible, and we are glad to see the French gendarme waving us to a halt at Arbaoua, on the zonal boundary.

The *fiche de police* we fill out informs us that we may not import firearms, spirits or portraits of the former Sultan of Morocco into the French zone. Quickly we are cleared, and the fine asphalt roads of French North Africa are welcome indeed. By 8 PM we are in Rabat.

December 22: Ribat el-Fath, "the camp of victory," as the Arab conquerors of Berber North Africa, has a restless, hurried feeling about it. The cafes along the Cours Lyautey, in the European quarter, might be those of any French provincial town. But their customers, many of the minor French officials who work in the palm-surrounded, California-type villas of the

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Residency complex, seem more hurried than their analogues in France.

"U.S. personnel will enter the *medina* only during daylight hours, and then in groups of at least two," says an American Air Force circular left on a table. But the *medina* seems more silent and subdued than even a year ago. Although the nationalists have not ordered a closing of the shops today—a frequent measure of passive protest or resistance—they are shuttered tightly at an early hour, and heavily armed police patrols walk about slowly in silent groups.

December 23: This morning we went to take pictures, by arrangement, of a rug-making cooperative run by the French Service of Moroccan Arts and Crafts. Most of the little girls at work on the rugs are camera-shy, but Mme. D.—the directrice, obtains the consent of one somewhat elderly, grinning Berber woman, of the nearby plains tribe of Zemmour, to pose by one of her rugs. "She went with me to the Moroccan exhibition in Paris last year," Mme. D.— tells us, and her protégé nods proudly. Her rug is not woven in the simple, geometrical Berber tradition, but in the vanishing Oriental, almost neo-Persian style of the Arabs of Fez and Rabat.

December 24: "It looks," Mr. Gilloteaux, the chief of the Residency's public relations service tells us in his office, "as though the extremists were trying to spoil our Christmas for us." He confirms that the Cairo and Tetuan radios are still egging on the nationalists here to new violence. Casablanca remembers the bomb that killed thirteen people in the central market a year ago today: the papers are full of news of shootings and knifings, and of special security precautions for the holidays. Last night a rather feeble home-made bomb exploded in front of a French toy store in downtown Rabat, injuring one French woman slightly. We go over for a look. Above the shattered panes and a destroyed baby carriage is a painted sign: "Best wishes for 1955."

December 25: Christmas in the sun, on the beach at Temara. The water is too cool for swimming, but the air is warm. Behind the rocks, I find a white narcissus blooming. A scorpion scuttles away, close to my feet.

December 26: Morning in the garden of the Oudaias: bumblebees are scouting the hibiscus and jacaranda blossoms and enjoying the warm sun. An elderly Moroccan in a spotless white burnoose tells stories to a group of very small childern who cluster around him. They address him, "*Ya sidna*" (A term of high respect) and hang on his every word.

A day of writing and early to bed. At 11:30 PM, heavy gunfire from a considerable distance, apparently off toward Salé and Port Lyautey: single reports that must be rifle shots, punctuated by an occasional dull *thomp* that sounds like a grenade. This ceases after fifteen minutes. It is repeated for ten minutes at 1:30 AM. Both times, a confusion of voices and shutters being opened below my window in the *medina*, then silence.

December 27: Absolutely nothing in the papers today to account for last night's fusillades, and the faces of Moroccans in the *medina* are as inscrutable as ever.

We leave for Marrakesh at noon, by-passing Casablanca. After the American air base at Nouasseur, traffic thins to three or four vehicles an hour, and we are out in the grass-flecked red plain known as the Chaouia, the hinterland of Casablanca, and part of the *bled*, the great flat expanse that extends over most of the country north of the Atlas Mountains and then resumes south of them to run into the Anti-Atlas and finally the Sahara.

Before dusk we are visiting friends at the American air base at Ben Guerir, started in 1950, and finally close to completion now. The engines of B-47s are shattering the silence of the *bled,* their vapor trails streaking the sky.

At sundown, Marrakesh is a lovely sight. The reds of the plain and a surrounding ring of hills are becoming browns and purples, and the seemingly perpendicular wall of the High Atlas, snow-crowned now in winter, looms behind the city and its vast palm grove. The lower mountain slopes are splotched here and there with the dark green, now shading into black, of cedar forests. The mud walls of "El-Hamra," "the red," as the city is occasionally called in both the Arabic and Berber languages, still bear some of the ruddy tints of late afternoon. We drive quickly through the European city and are soon installed in a small hotel in the *medina.*

December 31: Not even the groups of tourists and weekenders scattered through the crowd in the street make this seem like New Year's Eve. Most of the afternoon I have been sitting on the terrace of the Café de France, trying to read and write, but mostly watching the crowds on the Place Djemaa-el-fna. The little waiter keeps me supplied with coffee and the Casablanca papers, but the spectacle of the great square is far more absorbing. Evening is coming on now and already a few oil lamps are being lit, as knots of people cluster closer around the story-tellers, magicians, witch-doctors, musicians, vendors, snake charmers and acrobats who perform on mats or near their tents of woven straw in the open square. Smoke from a hundred cooking fires is rising into the air, and a group of Sudanese and Mauretanian drummers are beating out their rhythms in a slowly rising tempo.

Two French weapons carriers, carrying four white-helmeted MPs each, pull up near one of the portable clusters of barbed wire which may be used to close the *medina's* entrances in time of trouble. A tall

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ghoumier, a uniformed Moroccan serving in the French Army, detaches himself from the group around one story-teller, and talks briefly with the driver of one of the weapons carriers. When he returns to the circle, a few members of the audience leave, one of them a tall hillsman, a well-dressed Berber with a dagger in a magnificent silver sheath. Then one weapons carrier, whose occupants are obviously nervous, pulls away hurriedly, its tires scuffing the pavement. The other remains parked on the square. The story-teller, who has ignored the whole scene, goes on with his recitation.

January 12: Monsieur T., the French director of the Moroccan arts and crafts cooperative in the Dar Si Said palace, is a nervous, sensitive man, enthusiastic about the need to preserve the native traditions of Moroccan art and craft values of its products, particularly in a land where the industrial revolution, still in its early stage, is debasing standards. Like the Officiers des Affaires Indigènes, who live and work among the desert and mountain people, his work is among the most valuable accomplished by the French in Morocco. He shows us the silversmiths, the tanners, the leather artisans, the rug workshop. "We have nothing to hide here," he says with a chuckle. Looking at the bright reds and blacks of the southern Berber rugs, and the crude, massive beauty of the jewelry, I am reminded again and again of the work of our southwestern Indians in the States.

January 15: Evening in the Cafe Algérienne: You tire quickly of the entertainment: neo-Egyptian belly-dances performed by three Arab girls to the wailing music of a small string orchestra and a drummer, alternating with slower, more prim and yet subtler, dances and songs of a troupe of mountain Berbers, clad in ankle-length white dresses, blue tattoos on their foreheads.

The people are far more absorbing. One group of young men, ignoring the Prophet's admonitions about alcohol, are sipping large glasses of beer, and I feel sheepish with my glass of hot mint tea. They are shy, but a short, stubby youth dressed in Western clothes, a Marrakchi judging by his acquaintance with nearly everyone in the cafe, joins them and soon draws me into the conservation. His French is better than mine, but we get along well in our *argot*. He seems to want to talk politics, though I am more than hesitant, since he is a Moroccan and this is a public place. "I think the old Sultan will be back," he says. His father runs a drygoods store, he tells me, and insists that the French must stay; that only through them will the country get the new schools, the new judicial and administrative system it needs. "The young people are not so sure," he tells me then. We fall silent, turning to watch a dance which has probably not changed for the past three thousand years. . . .

January 26: This from a French merchant of Marrakesh, a reader and admirer of André Malraux; a former admirer of General de Gaulle: "Premier Mendès-France is the best premier since Clemenceau. He realizes that North Africa, especially Algeria, where partisan warfare has been going on for three months now, is the key to the *survival* of France, and that concessions must be made. But how to make concessions to the nationalists, who refuse to even talk with the feudal pashas whom France has relied upon?"

I am certain that his opinion is not a typical one among the French community here.

January 28: Casablanca: The stinging sun and timeless scenes of Marrakesh are only one hundred miles to the south. Yet this is a city of another age, a half-caste thing compounded of America, Europe, Africa. European shops and hotels, European factories, only a few of which are slowly beginning to pay Moroccans and Frenchmen the same wages for the same work—and an almost tangible *malaise* in the air. Squalid slums and fine, modern housing projects, built by French energy and French funds, with medical

clinics, dispensaries. Yet in both slums and housing developments, almost daily terrorism; soldiers throwing up road blocks to check passing cars for suspects or arms; shots heard at night—these have long been part of normal, daily routine here. "They come to the city, these Arabs," a Frenchman tells me, pointing out a ragged group crossing the Place de France, where a twelve-story, white office building confronts the squalor of the old *medina*, "looking for work. They leave behind their farms, their families, their villages. When they find no work, they are easy prey for political agitators. Some may agree to kill a man for five dollars."

Yet life in Casablanca, as in all Morocco, goes on, and the city grows and thrives. It is probable that few of the nine million native Moroccans—or the 250,000 Frenchmen here—have themselves suffered personally from the protracted birth pangs that promise eventually to convert an ancient, crumbling empire into a modern state. Many, too, have certainly benefited greatly. This is much to say in a land as darkly shadowed by uncertainty as Morocco is today.

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The Future of Distributism

JAMES V. SCHALL

DISTRIBUTISM is an idea. Like all ideas, it will be limited, shaped, modified by the matter, by the people, by the times in which it is received and in which it finds real existence. If we can embody distributism in the modern world—and we can—it will not be the distributism of 1355, nor will it be the distributism of Eric Gill, as much as I value his criticism of the present system, nor will it be that conceived, I fear, by most professed distributists with the exception of Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton.

What I mean to say is this: the basic principles of distribution are those of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas—human-sized social and productive units, strong and vigorous local communities, personal activity of individual men whereby they acquire for themselves the intellectual and moral habits of which art is but one, a powerful and adequate and limited state authority ordained to the distributist and pluralist organization of society, leisure, personal private property. These principles are universal but they have to be applied to reality so that in their very application they take into account changing times, changing customs, changing peoples. And what a future society in which all these principles take shape will look like may be quite different from what we might expect, using our own experience and our own imagination as norms.

I say "future society," of course, because most of these principles have a very imperfect existence today, if any existence at all. But they can exist tomorrow in the very midst of our industrial society, if we do not throw up our hands and stop thinking about distributism.

It was the great merit of Hilaire Belloc that he actually saw how industrial society could have been naturally subsumed into a Christian and distributist society. He saw clearly that guilds of men united by co-ownership could have given us an industrial society which would have worked positively for the common man. Belloc's point was that if industrial society were owned and operated by small men organized in cooperative endeavors we could have been saved from the incarnate greed of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, whereas industry in the hands of the capitalist has caused heaven only knows what damage—even though our bombs are now bigger, and some of us eat better.

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When Mr. Belloc wrote the *Restoration of Property*, he did not say that the positive suggestions he proposed for placing property in the hands of small men would work in any country in the world, at any time. He said that they would probably work in the England and perhaps the Belgium of the time he wrote. In other words, he understood the difference between principle and application. Would the same methods work today? Probably not. But others would, others which would achieve a well-divided and economically stable system of ownership—which after all is the idea we seek to realize.

IN *The Outline of Sanity*, G. K. Chesterton gave us a clue about the way to realize the distributist theory in practice and in fact. The clue is this: If we want to reintroduce distributism into modern society, we must start where we are, with what exists here and now and from thence proceed to change present laws, present customs, present ways of doing things, gradually but steadily. We are to go forward, not backward. Chesterton is always accused by those who never read him—or having read, misunderstand him—of wanting to go back to the Middle Ages. But this is the last thing he wanted to do, and almost the supreme insult we could make to a man of his genius is to attribute this monstrosity to him. In fact, he once wrote an essay on Mr. William Morris (in *Varied Types*) in which he pointed out that Morris' real failure was exactly this fault of wanting to reintroduce the externals of the Middle Ages—an obvious absurdity.

Chesterton's main point about the Middle Ages, it seems to me, was simply this: If you take an average medieval man and compare him with an average modern man, the medieval man will prove on the whole to have been a more happy, a more unique, a more human character, precisely because he was more developed in the things that really count, in the human as opposed to the technological order. In short, he probably had more moral and intellectual virtue, as St. Thomas might have put it. Here I think Chesterton had an arguable point. But in arguing this way, he did not mean that we should go back to the external conditions of the Holy Roman Empire. That is an entirely different question. We would not, for example, say that just because we thought a slave in the Roman Empire was better off than one in the Communist empire, we therefore wanted

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to go back to Rome. The fact is that we would prefer a system quite different from either one. So did Chesterton. He felt that there could be something better than either medieval France or modern England—and so do I.

The important thing, however, to remember here about Mr. Chesterton's position on the possibility of a distributist society in the modern world is that he actually saw a way for it to be realized. And that way exists today—indeed, even more so than in his time for, as he foresaw, capitalism of its very nature could produce conditions which would contribute not to capitalism, but to distributism. Capitalism has, I believe, produced what we need to realize distributism. Chesterton's major point about distributism was this, that you have to make the people independent owners. When you do this they will take over from there, for you cannot, must not, legislate the shapes the human spirit may take once the conditions for its freedom are realized.

This, I say, can be done today. We can restore property, but the form in which this principle can and will take shape will probably be much different from that which many distributists seem to expect. But how? I think the general outline can and should take the form of a concentrated and intelligent effort of workers in all industries and companies to buy the industries and companies in which they labor. Sounds ridiculous? even radical? Perhaps, but there is not one industry in the United States that could not be purchased by its workers in, at the maximum, a ten years' period of time at a relatively small cost of several thousand dollars per worker. Benjamin Fairless has said that United States Steel would cost its workers the amount of a medium-priced automobile apiece. Sears Roebuck is fifty per cent employee-owned now.

THIS, however, is merely the initial step and does not get to the core of the problem. Hand in hand with such a purchase must go a twofold plan, whereby all individual units of a company would eventually be placed under the direct control and ownership of workers and managers in a given locale. Such a concept, it seems to me, involves nothing impossible. For if we will only look at what already exists in industry, we will not find one huge, vast building called General Motors or General Electric. Rather, we find there are General Electric plants of small, medium, and large sizes dotted in cities and towns all over the nation. We do not have to "break down" anything; it is already broken down for us. Indeed, industry has itself found the small unit much more efficient in a great many cases anyhow, and we need only to capitalize on this fact. I do not wish to minimize the difficulties, but I do insist that we have only difficulties facing us, not impossibilities as so many of our economists would probably hold.

The other requirement is that the local body of worker-owners (and here by workers I mean local foremen, managers, clerical help, etc., as well as strict workers) evolve a form of cooperative organization whereby ownership efficiency, and cooperation on the local level can be maintained. On this point I fear union opposition, for it means reapplying the union principle in a new context— they used to call it a guild, but it does not matter what we call it just so the idea is clear.

Chain stores such as Sears, Safeway, A & P, and the like should be broken down by a process which gradually leads from co-ownership to individual and local ownership in which local managers and operators will own and control their own stores and policies in and for their own communities. Again, the distribution units of retail products and of the manufacture of a great many others should be multiplied as much as possible. Is this a dream? It may be, but it is exactly what is happening in Suburbia today, and it needs only intelligent purpose to make the system into a true distributism.

I see no reason why, for many products, we cannot consciously make our necessary machines and units of such a size that men could own and operate them in their own neighborhood, for their own neighborhood. In the same fashion we should try in every way possible to multiply stores, give them to more men, and not make the same store bigger. One very effective way of accomplishing this, as Belloc suggested, is to formulate the tax laws so that their weight falls more heavily on the huge and complex units than on the small ones—the very opposite of our present policy. And this is not only good distributism; it is also, in the long run, good business.

But to encourage and develop such a system we need laws and experience and thinking. In this question, we should not make the mistake of haste and recklessness. Perhaps fifty or sixty years would be needed to iron out the most important of the difficulties facing us, and this even after we once decide where we want to go. For here we are in the ethical and practical order where change must be slow and prudential to be effective. Laws cannot be changed drastically and speedily, St. Thomas wisely held, without greater hurt.

WHAT about the problem of art and the artist? Two things seem to be happening today that shed a new light on the problem. Firstly, what is called "automation" probably will drastically reduce the work force today required for non-human industrial tasks. I know that many distributists shout anathema at the mere mention of automation in any form. But I think it really does offer us a way to free the majority of men for more fully human tasks, in somewhat the same way that the Athenian slaves freed the

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Athenian citizens for more noble efforts. Without an industrial backdrop of some kind I do not see exactly how we can keep alive and healthy the earth's ever increasing millions. With an intelligent use of automation for certain very definite and very well-defined purposes, I believe that we can actually return the material conditions of leisure, in the Aristotelian sense of that term, to the men of this earth.

Secondly, the phenomenon known as "do-it-yourself" is, as a matter of fact, reintroducing very rapidly individual and personal handicraft into the very heart of "Autodelphia." Perhaps some would not admit that this is handiwork, but I think that it is and that it will essentially provide the solution we are seeking in this regard—which is the possibility of each man in his home developing and exercising his *habitus artis*.

What about agriculture and the farms? This is a more difficult problem. One way to prove very quickly the ability of very small, family-sized farms to survive would be to invite a million or so Japanese or Italian farmers to our shores and grant them three acres apiece; they would prove the survival value of small farms in a hurry. But then, there are immigration laws, and foreigners, well . . . We could also insist that farm machinery be manufactured on a much smaller scale, small tractors, etc., intended for the smaller farm. We could make it unprofitable for huge commercial farm companies to "mine" the land. Although some think that these huge farms are necessary, they appear to be very hard on the land itself, and if they deplete the soil for the future they really are not valuable to our nation, no matter how much they may produce now. Then, too, I think it would be good if the great majority of men practiced the agricultural art to some extent, no matter what their occupation, and this can now be done by intelligent city and county planning of housing districts, since the automobile has made it practical for men to live in outlying areas where more space is available—just as Mr. Chesterton said it would.

An important factor that should not escape our notice in this discussion is that the tenor of the industrial age itself is changing. What will happen, for instance, when we get small atomic power and heating units that will last a lifetime? The possibilities stagger the imagination. For one thing, this development will enable people to live in very distant and scattered places. Here again is another indication that the capitalist society can in fact evolve into the distributist society and in certain respects is actually doing so. That is why we must not withdraw into the desert as some suggest. The battle for distributism is not won, certainly; indeed, the effort to create a distributist society has barely got under way. But by the same token the battle is not lost either, and this is no time for obituaries.

A REMINISCENCE

Albert Einstein

WE could tell when spring came, because then he wore sandals instead of galoshes, on his daily walk from the small, clapboard, green-shuttered house to the Institute. In summer, sometimes, he would stop as I sprayed the lawn clumsily wetting myself. "It's only water" he would say, laughing. But he felt strongly about water. Once, walking back from the Institute, he spoke of the lowering of the water-table as more serious for the world than even the threat of war: "If I were dictator I would charge for water, everywhere. If people had to pay for it they would not waste it so much. It cannot be replaced, the water-table," he said.

He would always stop and jest with the children, and there are countless stories of how he did this small girl's arithmetic, or that small boy's sums. He quipped with the old too—a surly eighty-year-old boasted on his birthday that Dr. Einstein had kidded him on his great age as he was "cleaning up in front." He could be very funny too—once, when I was in his house he pointed out his closed screen door approvingly. "Very useful against cranks," he said. "Cranks?" I asked and he replied "Yes; all my life I have been pursued by cranks. Once I was alone here with my daughter—our dear Miss Ducas was out. And my daughter was afraid of the man, so I came down, and he tried to argue and argue with me. Finally I got a chair and sat down, and still the man talked, separated from me only by the screen door. Suddenly I said, 'Look—look at that crayfish.' 'Where,' the crank said, startled. 'There, there.' 'I don't see any crayfish,' he replied. 'Neither do I see what you are telling me,' I said. And after that he went quietly away."

I met Dr. Einstein first at Oxford. He was staying with the Denekes. Marga, a musician, and her sister, a German professor, lived next door to Lady Margaret Hall. Dr. Einstein, for the Denekes' sake, gave a talk to the girls at LMH; marvelously clear, even for such unscientific characters as most of us were. And, the next evening, he played the fiddle and Marga the piano, in the big music room at Gunfield. That was twenty-five years ago; but already we knew he was the greatest man in the world. "As great as Newton?" as later my wondering ten-year-old asked, after meeting Dr. Einstein for the first time, and my husband told him, yes. The last time I saw Dr. Einstein we talked for an hour of "Augustine's idea of time." Anthony Standen, a chemist, was with us, and said it was marvelous how Dr. Einstein spoke of the quantum theory in terms a chemist would understand. I

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could not follow them, so just stared at the beautiful face with the aureole of white hair, and the unforgettable eyebrows, and the unique pervenche blue eyes. The big window facing him looked out on a sunny lawn; the book-lined room was very quiet, when suddenly Dr. Einstein said something I understood: "If you accept the quantum theory then macrocosms have no localization in space unless observed." I asked, "Like God in the quod?" And he said, "Yes, there is much of Berkeley in the quantum theory." Then, after we reverted to Augustine's idea of time, which Dr. Einstein said was subjective—one time for the butterfly, one for the tortoise, another for man—"But there is objective time, physical time" that the star's light is measured by, he said. Anthony Standen asked him if when he said "der lieber Gott wurfelt nicht," it implied he believed in Him, but Dr. Einstein said, "That was in a private letter; it should not be quoted out of context;" and would not be drawn. Yet, at a meeting at the Institute where were only himself, Julian Huxley, Dr. Oppenheimer and Dr. James Kritzeck, the "sole basis of agreement among the group was specifically defined as Jacques Maritain's address before the Second International Conference of UNESCO at Mexico City in 1947."

The dear God indeed does not play dice; and He never made a more dedicated human being, or a more noble, saintly and gentle neighbor than Albert Einstein. May the light even he could not measure shine perpetually upon him.

ANNE FREMANTLE.

THE SCREEN

TO THE LADIES

THE distaff side of the cinema colony seems to be taking over the screen this week—and with results that will no doubt considerably interest the distaff side of the audience. Eleanor Parker, whose acting improves with every picture, gives us a moving and sensitive performance as Marjorie Lawrence, the Australian girl who became a great singer, was stricken with polio at the height of her career, and returned in spite of overwhelming odds to sing again. Obviously "Interrupted Melody" is a success story, but Producer Jack Cummings and Director Curtis Bernhardt have used CinemaScope and color effectively and have included enough singing scenes (with the fine voice of Eileen Farrell, whom we do not see) to cover a short course in operatic highlights. All this, with Glen Ford too, makes for good entertainment for those who like this sort of thing. And Miss Parker and Mr. Ford keep things from becoming saccarine.

GREER GARSON, who's a popular and good actress but doesn't have too much luck in her choice of roles, now turns up as a woman doctor who took Santa Fe by storm in the 1880s. Men are likely to find "Strange Lady in Town" interesting enough but long and uncomfortably biased in favor of the feminists. But women, especially those who like their chocolates with soft centers, will be won to the film from the moment that Santa Fe's other doctor (played by Dana Andrews in a continuous sulk) says to our red-haired heroine, "Just because you couldn't get yourself a man, you do the next best thing: act like one." Miss Garson doesn't act like a man at all; she acts as charmingly lady-like as Mrs. Miniver even when she's flashing a scalpel. Frank Butler's episodic story and screenplay are as crowded as a soap opera with incidents that give Greer opportunity to display spunk and suffering and feminine intuition. She is further assisted by Cameron Mitchell, Lois Wilson, Walter Hampden, and many others as Santa Fe citizens undeserving of such a beautiful doctor. Producer-director Mervyn LeRoy has given the whole picture an appropriate gloss in CinemaScope and color.

GINA LOLLOBRIGIDA, certainly one of the prettiest girls on the screen in any country, is also not too fortunate in choice of vehicles. Her latest, "The Wayward Wife," based on Alberto Moravia's novel, is one of the most confused movies to come out of Italy in a long time, and I found myself getting further lost in the welter of details as one flashback piles on another. Actually the flashbacks are meant to explain how this wife got herself into such a pickle, but the only thing they make clear is that this scheming and unscrupulous woman doesn't deserve anything better than she got. The picture is further hampered by mediocre acting and dubbed-in English with voices that obviously do not fit the characters. All of which must go to prove that it takes more than gorgeous Gina to make a movie.

MAYBE this is not a good week for the Italians. Although it has a pretentious production and classy cast, "Mambo" is also a dismal failure. Its story about a dancer (Silvana Mangano) torn between her love for a low-life gambler (Vittorio Gassman) and a hemophilic count (Michael Rennie) is made pretty absurd by dashes of phony philosophy. Director Robert Rossen, never quite sure what this story is trying to say, doesn't help his actors much; and you have a feeling that the whole plot was changed at the half-way point. It certainly cannot be the fault of Shelley Winters and Katherine Dunham that their roles never come through.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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THE STAGE

IBSEN AND CHEKHOV

MR. David Ross' current production of "The Three Sisters," and the recent mounting of Ibsen's "The Master Builder" at the Phoenix, have imposed on our negligent awareness two masterworks of the modern repertoire: dramas of the interior life which explore, with a particular edge and intensity, the special relation of being to consciousness in our time. "The Master Builder" is a play in the later Ibsen manner, a work of austere and massive presence, flinty and impartial: a lucid Northern air bathes its oblique surfaces, eroding whatever would present itself as facile or seductive. Here, being and consciousness—the symbolic and the actual—exist in a continuously fruitful interplay: the masterbuilder Solness is anchored in a reality of tangible shapes and pressures, yet into his heart, too, that "wind that chills" finds a passage: a wind carrying the foul dust of non-moral spirit, out of a world of trolls and Vikings, of helpers and servers and birds of prey. From that tension and coupling, a subject is born: fate perhaps (so "infinitely strange and terrible" Henry James called it); possibly retributive guilt, the self brought to the tribunal of conscience. Yet the play's grandeur lies in a certain imaginative weight and momentum, the sense we have of density and enigmatic substance, of something complex and elusive moving from out the center into the smallest veins; "the whole thing"—again I quote James on the play's 'subject' or 'idea'—"throbs and flushes with it, and yet smiles and mocks at us through it, as if in conscious supersubtlety."

To submit to such a play is to expose oneself, as Rilke said of Ibsen, to "the very great, deep, essential . . . doomsday and judgment . . . something ultimate"; to present it, within the given context of our theater, is an act of responsible audacity. The production at the Phoenix was one of curious triumphs and defeats: Boris Aronson's decors had a compelling anonymous personality, suggestive but not intimidating, that was one of the victories of contemporary stage design; again, the costumes achieved a remarkably discreet compromise of time and period. Of the performances, Margaret Barker's Aline—pitched finely at the right distance and elevation—impressed most; however, the balance of the supporting cast sustained that tradition of inferior secondary playing which has become such a melancholy certitude at the Phoenix. Nor had Max Faber's adaptation, I thought, the necessary resonance: even the angular rigidities of the Archer-Gosse version would have been preferable to this commonplace naturalistic surface, so loose and casual in tone.

Yet what finally wrenched the production out of security was—in performance—a deformity of its essential shape; a kind of wilful projection (by Oscar Homolka and Joan Tetzel) of self against the unassailable mystery at the dark heart of the drama. For mystery it is—not a problem, not a secret—and mystery implies some dilation of spirit, the flux of an ambiguous and multifaceted reality. Mr. Homolka and Miss Tetzel reduced the rich substance of the Solness-Hilda relationship purely to the psychological; it emerged as one species of a rather cliché sexual situation, with Mr. Homolka as a troubled Scandinavian burgomeister, and Miss Tetzed a *wandervogel* girl guide on holiday. The deadly obsessiveness, the portentous stillness and imaginative rapacity were nowhere in evidence. This misplaced center of gravity withdrew the mind from the proper sphere of Ibsen's intention, and left both play and audience rudderless in a sea of inexplicable moral experience.

MR. Ross' production of "The Three Sisters" (*at the 4th Street Theater*) is a minor achievement in a major genre: it makes the play—in Stark Young's luminous and continuously faithful translation—accessible; it nothing common does, or mean; it communicates a certain fullness and delicacy of emotion, in the recording of which Chekhov is without peer. The playing lacks, perhaps, a binding unity of style, though Peggy Maurer's Irina—pliant and touched still with a curious fine strength—and Morris Carnovsky's diffident Andreyev—masterly in its projection of mature passion, then of ennui and the withering heart—are faultless. Mr. Ross is limited by the physical resources of a theater which virtually puts intimacy to rout, yet beyond this, I do not think he has succeeded in organizing those masses of feeling—shapeless and inert islands of solitary personality—which constitute the texture of a Chekhov play. A subterranean unity, below consciousness, bridges those islands, and in performance the calculated irrelevancies, the strands of individual life, the cross-references so fragile and haunting—all these must somehow be meshed, articulated, above all *registered*. Notably in "The Three Sisters"—with its dense orchestration of solitudes— do we feel the compulsion of that need.

A total rapport, a seamless tissue of awareness and response: therein would lie your ideal Chekhov production, that vision of twilight perfection which constantly eludes us. Once, here, Mr. Ross and his performers suggest the vision: in a third act which suddenly gathers all its passion round a point of fixity, an image of beauty —purely the beauty of human effort and aspiration— and in its insistence, its urgent solicitation of the heart, presses surely on the very nerve of life.

RICHARD HAYES.

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THE LADIES IN BLACK

I WAS delighted a few weeks ago to see that *Time* had finally got around to putting a nun on its cover. It was long past due. Through the years representatives of just about every group and class in America have been pictured on *Time's* covers, and it had long bothered me that no one thought of personifying the astounding accomplishments of American sisterhoods in a cover-story.

One does not have to travel far in Christian lands to realize that the U.S. nun is quite distinct. Religious orders of women in this country are characterized by a drive and initiative distinctly American. Look at the histories of American sisterhoods and you will find a pattern repeating itself again and again.

Some poorly educated small group of European nuns arrives in this country, with little or no material resources. The community gets a toe-hold somewhere and begins whatever work is at hand. They scrimp and save and expand, slowly at first. The original founders draw new followers to the order. In time they establish schools and hospitals, orphanages and institutions of different kinds.

They strive earnestly and somewhat doggedly to improve themselves. They grow increasingly better educated as a group. In time the community which began so inauspiciously has hundreds of members, many with graduate degrees and up-to-the-minute professional training as teachers, nurses or administrators. They don't remain satisfied but drive ahead. More members are added, more institutions are founded, their work expands in a hundred different directions. When they feel secure enough they often undertake some kind of foreign mission and the Sisters at home put all their efforts behind supporting it. Now they send American girls all over the globe. Back to the motherhouse in Michigan or New Jersey come mission-trained postulants, the nucleus of new communities in far-off lands.

The little community that arrived from Europe a half century or three-quarters of a century ago in time is a thriving order, burdened with maintaining dozens of separate foundations. Something precious is probably lost in the very growth and the greater organization it entails, the older nuns will tell you sadly. The colder efficiency of such an operation may not be as appealing as the original family-like feeling in the order when it was a smaller community. But for all this, the accomplishment of one American sisterhood after another is strikingly within the American tradition.

Hundreds of American Catholic schools, colleges, academies, hospitals, orphanages, hospices for the aged, the mentally defective, etc., bear eloquent witness to what may be the greatest single accomplishment of women in history. It is said that American Catholics are the best instructed Catholics in the history of the Church. More than any other factor, the credit for this belongs to American nuns. What a problem the Church faced in this country where millions of immigrants had been dislocated, thrown in a strange and baffling culture and cut off from their ancestral roots! And yet out of all this came the American Church, which for many reasons is the wonder of the Catholic world. I do not say that the American sisterhoods stood alone in accomplishing all that has been done. But without them, the story might have been quite a different one.

To do this tremendous job required not only piety and selfless devotion—and these are found in nuns the world over—but that certain drive and ambition and spirit of adventure which are peculiarly American. *Time* did a remarkably good job in explaining the mystical aspects of convent life. Now perhaps *Fortune* can go to work on the more mundane level. I think a survey would show that American nuns have a record that would stand easy comparison with the most fabled tycoons where it comes to plain brick-and-mortar accomplishment.

Mother Cabrini, who died in Chicago, was the first American nun to be canonized. The Church never canonized a busier or shrewder saint, male or female. Mother Cabrini, the model of American nuns, may also be said to be something of a prototype. She combined an extremely active life with a mystical sense rarely matched. She was forever on the move, amazingly concerned with details.

I have had the good fortune to know a fairly large number of nuns on a personal basis. First of all, there were the nuns who gave me my first school lessons. Each of them was different. Some I remember with affection and gratitude; others I would just as soon forget.

Since that time, as an adult, I have met dozens more. Some were dull and unimaginative; others were quick and exciting people to talk to. I know nuns who think Joe McCarthy was sent by God and pray for Franco every day of their lives. I know others who follow The Commonweal as if it were inspired and offer their partisan prayers for Adlai Stevenson. One nun-friend of mine vigorously supported Henry Wallace; another did some very successful part-time lobbying for an FEPC law. There are nuns who delight in *The New Yorker* and others who spend their recreations nodding approval over Westbrook Pegler's columns.

There are nuns and nuns—highbrow nuns, lowbrow nuns and many middlebrows, Republican nuns and Democratic nuns, right-wing nuns and "liberal" nuns. It takes all kinds. But the thing they have in common transcends these differences. I wish more people knew more about nuns. Perhaps the *Time* cover-story was only a start in telling the fascinating role they have played in making the Church in America what it is.

JOHN COGLEY.

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COMMUNICATIONS

NUCLEAR WAR

The author of the following letter on nuclear strategy served, prior to the second world war, as Director of Military Training in India and subsequently as commandant of the British Army's Middle East Staff College. He was associated with General Wavell and chief of staff to General Auchinleck in the British desert campaigns of 1940, '41 and '42.

Cootehill, County Cavan, Ireland

TO the Editors: Before World War II crossed the horizon, I was one of a group of British military experts inspecting an experimental armored car at a testing establishment. I was then responsible for the general staff aspects of such matters and I asked a very senior general in the group what he thought of the machine. I have never forgotten his reply. "It looks ugly," he said, "and I have found that ugly-looking things are seldom efficient." Reading Father Drinkwater's article on "The Morality of Nuclear War" [March 18] I recalled that far-distant conversation. Nuclear war is also too completely ugly to be militarily efficient. Any system of warfare based on the principle of indiscriminate destruction is doomed to failure, since the sole aim of warfare, the prime objective of grand strategy, must be the attainment of a better peace with the minimum of destruction. A theory of warfare which implies the use of weapons that will reduce the highly-developed parts of the world to useless, radioactive ruins is not a viable strategy. It is not strategy at all, if only because in such circumstances the survivor, and so the victor, is likely to be the more numerous, less sensitive, more ruthless, and less vulnerable side in the struggle. Communism, assuming as I myself believe, that there is such a thing as militant and aggressive world-Communism, once committed to large-scale military aggression is likely to regard Russia and its peoples as totally expendable. Provided, at the termination of the nuclear exchanges, the Communist strategists have successfully secured a grip on Continental Western Europe, and thus on the Middle East and northern Africa, the fact that east of them lies a devastated Russia will be of small account. The subsequent phase of "broken-backed" warfare which our nuclear strategists predict as succeeding the fleeting period of intense H-bombing, will be, for Communist strategists, the victory phase, since during the period of unlimited destruction the armies of the West will have been swept out of Central Europe.

The basic strategical concept on which SHAPE now plans its European strategy, intense H-bombing of Russian territory plus a major battle in central Germany fought as far as possible eastwards with the concomitant destruction of Britain and probably also of the eastern seaboard of the U.S.A., is fundamentally wrong in military conception, for it is a hundred to one that the Russian armies of Communism will win the first continental land battle, whatever happens on the fringes; the atomized fringes will then enable the Communist High Command to protect their consolidation of Continental Europe. NATO strategy is based on the wishful-thinking that it is possible to defeat a more numerous and more ruthless enemy with equivalent armament at his own game. If this gamble fails, not only will the counter-Communist part of the world have lost the material struggle, it will also have forfeited its right to victory in the equally vital struggle of morality, having shown itself as no better than its adversary in either the material or the moral fields of action.

This jettisoning of the moral basis of material action revealed itself plainly in the second phase of World War II which followed the defeat of Rommel's drive on the Middle East base in the Nile Delta and the slowing down of the parallel German drive in southeast Russia. This fact Mussolini acknowledged in the following words; "The wheel of fortune turned on June 28th 1942, when we halted before El Alamein. . . . I advised Hitler to come to an agreement with Russia . . . at any price, giving up everything he had conquered, the Ukraine included. . . . I told him we had lost the initiative from June 1942 onwards and that a nation which had lost the initiative had lost the war." (Mussolini's Memoirs)

Unfortunately in mid-July 1942, Allied statesmen did not recognize this political and strategical turning-point; to them the crisis continued. Tragically for us all, in August 1942, Churchill took upon himself an increasingly direct intervention in the military conduct of the second phase of the war, which he turned from the Phase of Strategical Counter-Attack into a Phase of Unlimited Retaliation. Political detachment was lost. The Phase of Unlimited Retaliation was signalized by the initiation of the policy of unconditional surrender, and marked by a stepped-up air assault on German population-centers, highlighted by the unnecessary obliteration of Hamburg. The climax of this savage phase came with the futile deal with Russia over intervention in Manchuria, and the useless crime of Hiroshima. It appears that on neither of these matters was General MacArthur consulted—scientists assumed control of warfare, strategists were at a discount. In the light of history, Father Drinkwater's scathing analysis of the violent and amoral element in Churchill's mode of thought is acute and not unfair. Churchill is no longer in command, but the men whom Churchill shaped in

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his own image during the Phase of Unlimited Retaliation are likely to be with us for long yet, and they are now the real hindrance to constructive strategical thinking in our present crisis, a crisis which derives directly from the vengeful Phase of Retaliation.

In the winter of 1943, Churchill said in my hearing that he would do a deal with the Devil if it helped him to kill Germans. My reply, which was badly received, was to the effect that not even the Prime Minister of Britain commanded a spoon long enough for such transactions. Today the Devil seems about to present his bill.

The strategists of retaliation have now developed the strategic-tactical heresy that land action depends for success on a preliminary process of total air neutralization of the battlefield, itself an inward extension of the indiscriminate destruction of populations beyond the battlefield. Fundamentally it is the strategy of indiscriminate nuclear bombardment. Here the moral issue immediately presents itself rawly. If I, as a general officer commanding ground forces enter a still-hostile city and butcher its inhabitants indiscriminately, I have committed a criminal act, rendering me liable to trial and execution. But if I, as a commander of similar grade, launch a bombing fleet on a mission of indiscriminate destruction of a similar city from the air and achieve that mission successfully, I have, according to the newest doctrine of war, merited applause. The wolf is a war-criminal, the vulture a war-hero. The men of the retaliatory phase saw no contradiction in all this, and they are the men now charged with the highest direction of the allegedly deterrent strategy to be employed in the opening phases of World War III until nuclear saturation dissolves into the so-called "broken-backed" war. But whereas, in World War II, before indiscriminate retaliation commenced, strategy had already created a situation in which the Axis faced irretrievable defeat, it is more than probable that in the opening phases of World War III, from the viewpoint of the West, the position will be reversed, and the West will have suffered the ground defeats that are the prerequisites of total victory in all elements of action.

The Western strategy of all-out indiscriminatory nuclear destruction inside Russia, regardless of Russian retaliation by the same means, combined with the fighting of a decisive land battle on the Eastern edge of the Iron Curtain in Western Europe, seems to me both militarily unsound and morally indefensible.

What are the alternatives? Are we completely committed to the nuclear bomb-lords? Can we shake free of this monstrous thing while preserving the moral and strategical integrity of the West against the psychological and military effects of a nuclear-heralded blitzkrieg across the Iron Curtain if we do as Father Drinkwater advises and renounce all weapons of indiscriminate warfare? Is it possible to counter nuclear warfare with non-nuclear weapons with a fair hope of defeating aggression? Personally I consider "H-bomb for H-bomb" a futile policy, and I hold that it is possible to create a defense strategy in Western Europe able to frustrate the ultimate aims of all-out aggression without employing nuclear weapons at all.

Granted that Western Europe must defend herself if attacked; where and how? Maginot had one answer; the Maginot line of pre-World War II was never attacked, it was turned by the north. Had it possessed its logical prolongation through Belgium to the North Sea it would have been impregnable. A modern Maginot line from the Rhine-mouth to the Adriatic would be equally proof against a blitzkrieg, no matter what nuclear weapons fell west of that line, itself secure against nuclear attack. Combine such a defense with powerful air defenses and proper home defense plans, including large-scale population-evacuation and population-protection for the areas west of that line, plus the defensive power of Germany as proposed by General von Bonin, and a Russian-based Communist offensive becomes an unattractive proposition. Aggression must go all the way, as Rommel's fate demonstrated, or it had better not begin at all. Money now being expended on the strategical and morally indefensible projects of ABC warfare had far better be diverted to this demonstrably non-aggressive strategy. If aggression cannot achieve its total purpose it eventually fails totally. It may be argued that the construction of such defenses takes more time than the West has to spare. In that event the West must prepare for the worst possible case, which entails the temporary abandonment of Continental Europe in favor of the defense of the European off-shore islands and the Iberian peninsula. These cannot be carried in a blitzkrieg rush, however seriously they may suffer from nuclear attack. At this point all the very considerable non-nuclear strategic assets of the West can be brought to bear. France will suffer no more severely through temporary abandonment than were she to become a nuclear target; strategically she will become a guerrilla buffer in the over-all campaign plan. She and Germany should not be bombed by the West in any circumstances.

The basic principle of non-nuclear strategy is thus founded on the effective defensive obstacle plus elbow-room and behind-the-front fighting. Get the final obstacle as far east as possible by all means, but do not be led into a decisive battle of maneuver against superior forces in Central Europe. But this is not all. . . . Why should not Russia have an anti-blitzkrieg Maginot line, plus a buffer zone? History demonstrates the impossibility of crushing Russia short of reaching the Urals. A modern defense line extend-

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ing say from Riga to Odessa would make Russia completely secure against any Western aggression, which again must either go the whole way or not begin at all.

Between the Russian western frontier and "Maginot line" in Russia there would be a deep outpost zone comparable to the outpost zone advocated by von Bonin in Germany. Moreover it is not unsound to envisage the intervening states, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Rumania, organized as a neutral block, armed and trained to defend the integrity of the neutral belt. The forces of the neutral belt, the garrisons of the eastern and western outpost zones, the main garrisons of the two great defensive lines and their reserves for counter-attack can be determined, quantitatively and qualitatively, by mutual agreement. Such an arrangement would effectively remove that fear of aggression, today all-pervading, which derives from the presence of ever-increasing field armies in intimate physical contact all across Central Europe. Indeed it would be reasonable to suggest that the setting up of this form of defense between West and East in Europe should be financed by the pooled resources of both West and East and established with United Nations supervision. Moreover the principle once applied in Europe could be extended to Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Thus the principles of strategy, now distorted by the supreme concept of the deterrent counter-offensive with indiscriminate weapons, could be brought back to the sounder basis of logically conceived defenses for both the potential combatants. The consequent banishing of fear would relax other tensions and the H-Bomb could be relegated to limbo. Release from mutual and understandable fear of aggression is far more a military than a diplomatic problem. Once a sound military solution has been mutually accepted, diplomacy and politics have only to confirm the arrangement reached.

Father Drinkwater suggests that the dangerous position into which we are all being propelled by the nuclear bomb-lords can be countered by widespread abstention on the part of all Christians from the construction and employment of these dastardly and superfluous forms of warfare. But in practice this abstention may not succeed; the men who make and launch these engines may be carefully chosen non-abstentionists. Such men may well be brought to believe that abstention plays directly into the hands of the adversaries and abstentionism is traitorous. It is necessary therefore that the strategical basis of the principle of indiscriminate warfare should be challenged by those strategists, who believe, as I do firmly believe, that indiscriminate warfare is not only ugly and evil but quite unnecessary in ensuring the survival of justice and peace on the planet.

(*Major-General*) E. DORMAN O'GOWAN.

An Englishman who lost his head

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The Craft of the Novel

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVEL 1900-1950. By Leon Edel. Lippincott. $3.

By JOSEPH M. DUFFY, JR.

LEON Edel's book is not a remarkable contribution to the literature of the criticism of fiction. This judgment is given immediately as a caution lest too much be expected of the work: it is not meant as a summary rejection of *The Psychological Novel*. For what, indeed, *is* distinguished among books on the theory and practice of the novel? What except F. R. Leavis' flickeringly brilliant *The Great Tradition,* Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction,* and James' *Prefaces* and his magnificent *Notes on Novelists*? If Mr. Edel does not provide any new or significant insight into the craft of the novel, his study may still serve as a competent introduction to the technique of the modern psychological novel.

The psychological novel is one which attempts to recreate the atmosphere of the mind, which leads the reader on an adventurous journey right into the minds of men and women. In a sense this novel is as old as the eighteenth-century work of Samuel Richardson who in *Pamela* and *Clarissa Harlowe* explored the palpitating interior life of two extraordinarily troubled young women. But Richardson's was a primitive and unique experiment which depended on the epistolary method. In the twentieth century the technique has been refined by, among others, Proust, Joyce, Faulkner, Dorothy Richardson, and Virginia Woolf.

Except for fairly extensive references to James and to Edmund Dujardin (the author of the pioneer modern psychological novel, *Les lauriers sont coupés*), Mr. Edel limits himself to these five major writers; he surveys briefly the background of their work, their characteristic methods and themes, and some of the special problems both for the writer and for the reader of psychological fiction. He points out, for example, the symbolist affinities of Proust and Joyce, Dorothy Richardson's debt to James' "point of view," and Virginia Woolf's clear imitation of *Ulysses* in *Mrs. Dalloway*. He notes the preoccupation—at times almost a hallucination—of all these novelists with time: whether it be Proust's shuttling the fabric of the past and present or Joyce's epiphanic concentration of life into a day in Dublin or Mrs. Woolf's rather pallid ordering of Mrs. Dalloway's lifelong day in London. And he considers the problem for the artist of maintaining aesthetic distance from his creatures, of submerging the autobiographical material into the artistic object; and the problem for the reader of adjusting to vicarious residence inside the mind of a fictional subject—even so odd a subject as Faulkner's idiot boy, Benjy, in *The Sound and the Fury*.

The book has been described above as a good introduction to the field. On this account it may perhaps be more useful than that always hoped-for "remarkably distinguished" study. Mr. Edel may not be profound, but he is too intelligent to be imprecise and too sensible to be extravagant. He is an authority on James, and displays a wholesome and ingratiating regard for his subject. He says enough to make one curious to read his authors and his comments are convincing. Under the influence of Mr. Edel's discussion I am even willing to take up again Dorothy Richardson's twelve-volume novel, *Pilgrimage*, although some years ago I left it in exasperation after the third volume. And in the light of Mr. Edel's remarks James' maddening tour de force, *The Sacred Fount,* seems worth a reconsideration. In short this little volume is recommended as a guide to those readers of fiction who are willing to enter the jungle and come face to face with that cunning and formidable beast, art.

Doom in Occupied Germany

THE DARK ARENA. By Mario Puzo. Random House. $3.50.

By R. T. HORCHLER

IN this first novel, Mario Puzo rattles again for us the dry bones of the Waste Land. His vision is of a world consumed by evil; his testimony of God made manifest by His absence. Particularly, we are given the story of Walter Mosca, an American GI who comes home from World War II so burdened and brutalized by the horrors he has known that he cannot accept as real the life of easy, ignorant convention which he left three years before. He returns, then, to the "real" world of evil undisguised, the "terrible land" which was (is?) Occupied Germany. Here Mosca takes up again his role as conqueror, this time as a civilian in Military Government; he takes up his old life with the German girl who loves him, and he takes up his destiny, which is to be destroyed.

The diseased society of conqueror and conquered is giftedly and horribly established, as we encounter everywhere a widening corruption. Fear, guilt, hatred, envy—these are the stuff of everyday life, breeding evils always worse. Everywhere there are the ruins, monuments of destruction and death; the air is thick with the dust that rises still from the rubble; and through the poisoned atmosphere lurk nightmare figures, who seek to exorcise their devils by plunging into depths of hate, brutality and sexual frenzy, by wallowing in degradation.

There is one person only, in Mr. Puzo's visioned world, who does not despair, who can love and who can believe in love. This is Hella, Mosca's German girl friend and the mother of his child. And Hella, inevitably, dies—her death the casual result of a chain of malice, greed, stupidity and error.

In the sense of doom which stalks the world, the belief in a providence

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wholly malignant, *The Dark Arena* moves beyond ordinary naturalistic pessimism: its horror and despair depend upon a faith in the reality of good and evil. But Mr. Puzo never comes to grips with the ideas that shape his anguished fable. What is the nature of this enveloping evil? Its source? Its relation to men? The raised questions are not met. Despite the rush of physical action, on the level of perception and thought almost nothing happens. The human beings involved are unaware and unthinking, their actions determined, seemingly, by the simple mechanism of stimulus and response.

Mr. Puzo's obvious talents—of invention and, especially, evocation of mood and place—are therefore wasted. His book, for all its force, is pointless and self-defeating. We are shocked but not engaged, not moved by pity and terror. The welter of blind suffering and degradation provides only a spectacle of unfocused, meaningless horror, undeniably powerful, but a sterile emotional experience.

Naguib of Egypt

EGYPT'S DESTINY. By Mohammed Naguib. Doubleday. $4.

By LEON DENNEN

WHEN Egypt's young officers revolted against King Farouk on July 23, 1952, they gambled their lives with the odds high against them. Yet so ripe was Egypt—as the rest of the Arab Middle East—for social and economic change that by noon of the next day Farouk's corrupt regime was overthrown and the military junta became master of the country.

The overwhelming support the young revolutionary zealots received from the poverty-stricken, hungry and diseased masses, especially from the displaced and landless *fellahin*, when they promised bread and a better life, enabled them to carry out their coup d'etat with a minimum of bloodshed and consolidate their power with maximum speed.

It is to General Mohammed Naguib's credit that at the critical moment in what he calls *Egypt's Destiny* he had the idealism and courage—unlike so many other Egyptian "liberal" politicians and high-ranking officers—to risk his career and even life by joining the revolutionary forces. However, as *Egypt's Destiny* amplifies what has become common knowledge, it was not the General but thirty-seven year old Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser and his handful of young conspirators who were the guiding spirit of Egypt's revolt. It was Nasser, rather than Naguib, who understood that one of the principal causes of poverty and ignorance in post-imperialist Egypt was the small but rapacious landlord-usurer class—that a country where two per cent of the landowners owned fifty per cent of the land was doomed to further decline and perhaps extinction. The "moderate" General Naguib was at all

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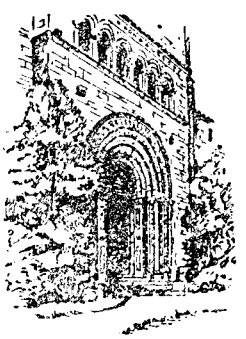

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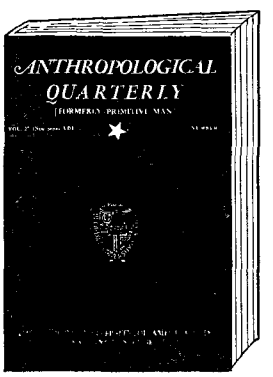

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times merely the "elder statesman," the front-man, for the obscure officers, and his demise, more than the struggle for power between two ambitious officers, symbolized the defeat of the so-called "liberal" grande bourgeoisie which first supported the revolution and then became frightened and turned its back.

Nevertheless, *Egypt's Destiny* is a warm and very human memoir and an interesting piece of recent Middle Eastern history. It is also a remarkable testament of an Eastern revolutionary leader who, though "purged" by his fellow-conspirators, remained alive to tell his story. The fact that General Naguib is safe in Egypt—though ostensibly under "house arrest"—throws additional light on the military dictatorship which, like Ataturk's, seems to have been inspired more by belated principles of nineteenth-century liberalism than by all-devouring fascism or Marxism-Leninism. As one revolutionary officer told General Naguib when they were debating the fate of ex-King Farouk: "Our Revolution has been almost bloodless, thanks to our effort to keep it pure. Why spoil its purity by spilling blood—even Farouk's blood—if it isn't absolutely necessary."

How long the Egyptian revolution will remain "pure" is another matter. If Premier Nasser can sweep away the corruption in Egyptian public life, carry out his agrarian reforms and reach a modus vivendi with Israel, he will render not only Egypt but the entire Middle East a historic service. And the example of Ataturk—although the young officers hate to be compared with the Turkish dictator—is there to show that in an Eastern country unused to democracy a military reformer may show the way to it.

Snapshot of a French Village

THE POSTMAN. By Roger Martin du Gard. Translated by John Russell. Viking. $3.

By WILLIAM DUNLEA

HAVING established himself as an unsurpassed master of the post-Zolaesque panoramic novel in *The World of the Thibaults,* in *The Postman* Roger Martin du Gard turns with knowing economy to the snapshot novel. In accordance with the basic genre rules he has denied himself the use of a hero and has gained thereby an ironic protagonist; this titular figure, though emerging as more than an arbitrary scapegoat, serves as chronological coordinating agent for the novel's independent episodes, arranged to leave no doubt about how foible-riddled the day-to-day life of a small rural French community can be.

The post-World War I village of "Maupeyroux," a prison of grotesque typicality, has its fair share of busy futility and ambitious frustration. It holds no secrets for Joigneau the cagey postman, as he pedals across it, always the detached confidante and most discreet of accomplices; one after another the local folk betray petty cupidity or bad blood to be the base of all their preoccupations: shopkeeper, worker, functionary—all live for profit, while the propertied gentry have built a security of which they are so jealous and untrusting it leaves them isolated from life.

Such is the flock that has long since inspired the good Abbé Verne to devote himself to the cultivation of his presbytery garden, allowing his domineering sister to administer a poisonously pietistic salvation. "He had done his utmost to break down their indifference to religion and to foster among his charges a spirit of practical Christianity. It had been a waste of time. Even the church-goers evaded his advances. . . . For too many generations his parishioners had been parsimonious in all things. . . . Little by little this indifference had got the better of his courage, his patience, and his health. And so he turned in upon himself, and lived according to Trappist rules of his own devising."

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Although the curé is only a character in the representational sense—as are all the other personalities—the moments at which he appears are among the most poignant in the novel. And there is one scene in which he is involved whose effect is of a polished Balzac (ironically so, for the author has been one of Balzac's most articulate modern disparagers). It is the one where the priest is pleading with the moneyed Querolles to abandon their project for donating a statue of Saint Anthony to the church in consideration of the plight of Mlle. Celestine, who had already made a vow to the saint that she herself would install it.

To laud the insights occurring in this novel of revulsion—or in a novel of compassionate protest—as "prophetic" in a *timely* sense, as has been done, is to give to the novelist what is owing the social historian. The latter broods over the world as he sees it, while the novelist is less than a bona fide artist if his brooding be not over the world as he creates it.

The Maupeyrouxs of the world have perhaps never been more brilliantly telescoped, their daily mood evoked so cunningly by insight so consistent and seldom descending to caricature. Yet Martin du Gard does not distil the essence poetically: *The Postman* is more sensitively shocking—in the best literary if not moral sense—than it is moving. The author is above all a stylist of naturalistic precision in its way technically ranking with the clarity of Gide, his great and confirmed admirer. One tangential criticism from Gide of his friend's materialistic mind-set is appropriate to *The Postman*—that Roger is more *chartiste* than *naturaliste*.

REVIEWERS

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